

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE
PAROCHIAL CHAPEL

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OF

BROUGHTON IN FURNESS,

In the COUNTY of LANCASTER,

ON SUNDAY THE 13th. OF MAY 1787.

Being the Anniversary of the Institution of Sunday-Schools in that Place,

By JEREMIAH GILPIN, M. A.

Minister of BROUGHTON, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable
CHARLES LORD HAWKESBURY, &c.

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A S E R M O N.

ROMANS CHAP. 12. VERSE 10.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.

THE christian religion could not have a stronger recommendation to the heathen world than the benevolent influence which it had upon the minds of the first converts. As it was intended to promote universal love and charity, *peace upon earth and good will towards men*; so these professions would naturally cause the eyes of all, Jews as well as Gentiles, to be turned towards the first preachers of the gospel, and careful would they be to examine if their lives corresponded with the doctrine they taught. No stronger test could there be of true christianity than brotherly love; *be kindly af-*

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sectioned one to another with brotherly love says the Apostle in the text, which was addressed to the Christians then dwelling at Rome, among whom controversies had been frequent and false doctrines were daily gaining ground; he therefore enforces the special command given by our Saviour to his disciples, who at the same time also laid down an invariable rule for discovering the truth of any man's conversion; *by this, says he, shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one towards another;* as if he had said, "ye are now going into the
 " world to propagate a new religion, which with-
 " out doubt will at first meet with a cool reception
 " in every quarter of the globe, because, it strikes
 " at the root of headstrong passions and fordid in-
 " clinations; it is therefore a duty particularly in-
 " cumbent upon you to display the excellency of
 " my institution in your own lives and conversa-
 " tions, and by an exemplary love towards each
 " other you will convince the world that you are
 " my true disciples; but if the seeds of malice,
 " hatred, and revenge, are suffered to produce their
 " baneful fruits in your hearts, be assured your-
 " selves, and the heathens also will be convinced that
 " you

“ you are not true Christians, because you regard
 “ not *the end of the commandment which is charity.* ”

Even so my bretheren, if you call yourselves christians and are not possessed of *that love which worketh no ill but rather good to it's neighbour*, your title is but assumed, and your pretensions to christianity are no more *than as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.*

To discover the propriety of this christian precept previous to enforcing the practice of it, let us first consider our general relation to each other as men, and as members of civil society.

It would be useless to prove that this world is a state of trial and not of retribution; every sober thinking man sees it in this light, and considers himself as placed here by divine providence to act a certain part, upon the performance of which, his condition in a future state will entirely depend: hence we discover the wisdom of Almighty God in the various distributions of this world's good; *the rich and poor meet together*, one to display the kind affection of brotherly love, the other to be exercised

in patience, fortitude, and humility; one humanely to heal the broken heart and pour balm into the festered breast, the other to receive these kind offices with grateful acknowledgements to their benefactors and thanksgiving to providence for directing the friendly hand *to help in time of need*. Thus riches on the one hand, and poverty on the other, cement mankind together in a close union, and connect an extensive chain of good offices which promote harmony and good order in this world, and lay the foundation of happiness in the next.

How loudly soever we may speak in praise of independency, it is no more than an imaginary acquirement or a false idea floating in the brain of a purse-proud mortal; however contradictory it may appear to the general sentiments of men who may be ranked in this class, yet it is nevertheless a matter of fact, that, the richest man in the world was never independent, nay what is more, so long as civil society exists, there never will be such a thing as independence. --- Let the independent man, as he calls himself, survey his extensive acres, let him enumerate his hoarded treasures which seldom are brought

brought to light, and then perhaps in despotic arrogance he may exclaim, " my power is great, no " man shall control me. " --- Stop ambitious mortal and consider, that without the sweat of industry thy property would be little worth; if thy poor labourers, who are so contemptuously treated, look up to thee for their daily bread, thou on the contrary art beholden to them for the necessaries, nay also the luxuries of life; the ground is thine which they till it is true, but the profits of their labour ultimately rest in thy coffers, for *to dig thou art unable*, and without the strength of others, *to beg* thou must soon be compelled. Numberless examples may be produced to prove the truth of this position but this alone will be sufficient to shew that we are dependent one upon another, and must live by the mutual assistance of each other; surely then we ought to be *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*, and exert ourselves to the utmost that we may *do good unto all men*.

THIS duty being grounded upon the principles of natural reason, and enrolled in the precepts of christian revelation, what plausible reason can any
man

man assign why he should not *rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, why he should not cultivate such an amiable, such a God-like disposition of mind as a desire to do good in his generation? If, he wants an example, let him look up to the author and finisher of our salvation *who went about doing good*, who saw great multitudes and was moved with compassion towards them, because, they had nothing to eat, and he would not send them away fasting lest they should faint by the way; he had compassion upon the ignorant and he instructed them, he had compassion upon the blind and he opened their eyes, he had compassion upon the lepers and he healed them, he had compassion upon the widow of Nain who had lost her only son the comfort and support of her life and he raised him from the dead; --- lastly, he had compassion upon us miserable sinners, to whom he hath opened the gates of Heaven and nothing but our inflexible obstinacy shall close them against us; *greater love hath no man than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends*: O Jesus! let all nations bow down before thee and praise thy holy name, for thy love to mankind is inexpressible, for in the midst
of

of thine agony and bloody sweat didst thou drink the cup of thy father's wrath for the redemption of the fallen race of mortals, swallowing the bitter potion with an humility and resignation peculiar to thyself, "*not my will O God, but thine be done.*"

IF you my friends, are not too proud to follow an example, strive to imitate this; the depravity of human nature 'tis true, will not suffer us to reach its sublimest perfections, yet it is our duty to do the best that we can, and rely upon his merits and the mercy of Almighty God, to pardon wherein we fall short. -- You say you have faith, *add then to your faith virtue and brotherly love*, and shew yourselves christians as well as men.

THE various motives which induce men to neglect the performance of kind actions to each other would perhaps be no easy task to enumerate; yet it is to be feared that avarice is the root from whence they all spring; a root, which thrives the best and produces the most luxuriant branches in that worst of soils --- a bad heart; hence proceed the many sophistical arguments which

which some men are wont to urge in defence of their contracted principles and aversion to do good; yet after all it may be doubted, whether their casuistical ingenuity is able to satisfy their own minds respecting the rectitude of their conduct: A true Christian rests not satisfied with artful arguments hatched in the brain of sordid knavery, but looks into the precepts of his holy religion where he is told, *that as he hath received the gift, even so should he minister the same to others, as a good shepherd of the manifold grace of God*; he sees the reasonableness of this duty, and knows the consequence of performing it; for, as Christ came to be his redeemer, so also does he believe that he will come to be his judge; a judge, who has fairly told him what will be expected at his hands previous to the great and general assize. On that solemn day when the numberless millions of the sons and daughters of Adam shall at the sound of the trumpet appear before an august tribunal, questions to this effect he is assured will be asked, --- “ I entrusted thee
 “ with certain talents *give now therefore an account*
 “ *of thy stewardship*: Hast thou fed the hungry ---
 “ clothed the naked --- instructed the ignorant ---
 “ comforted

" comforted the fatherless and widows in affliction ?
 " if not, go from hence thou sordid wretch and
 " herd with monsters of thy own disposition ;
 " ignorance thou cannot plead, for it was pub-
 " lished in the book of life, that, the God of
 " mercy appointed thee a steward to comfort and
 " relieve thy miserable bretheren ; the bounties of
 " Heaven as profuse as the *dew of Hermon* have
 " been showered down upon thee, but through
 " avarice, or perhaps wanton prodigality, they have
 " been converted to other purposes than for what
 " they were given ; the voice of the injured and
 " oppressed call aloud for justice, and the tor-
 " ments prepared for the devil and his angels,
 " are ready to receive thee : But,

" If thou hast fed the hungry --- cloathed the
 " naked --- instructed the ignorant, nay if thou
 " hast only given a *cup of cold water* to misery
 " out of a benevolent heart and a sincere desire
 " to do good to the utmost of thy power, ---
 " then will the heavenly judge pronounce, come
 " thou blessed of my father, thou that could feel
 " the miseries of thy fellow creatures and shed the

“ tender tear of compassion over the wretched and
 “ broken in heart, when a tear was all that thou
 “ could give, enter into the joy of thy lord, into
 “ the blessed society of saints and angels, who like
 “ thee upon earth have been eminent for benefi-
 “ cence, and together with them, inherit the king-
 “ dom prepared for you from the beginning of the
 “ world. ” This is the inheritance the true Chris-
 tian is born to, this is the *crown that fadeth not
 away, eternal in the heavens*. The formal Christian
 may claim this crown, but his title thereto is very
 defective; and it is to be feared, that too many
 of this character will be found *when the secrets of
 all hearts shall be disclosed*: For, it is no uncom-
 mon thing in this our day to see men arrogate to
 themselves the title of Christians, when at the same
 time they are destitute of the moral virtues and
 leading features which characterize the true disci-
 ples of Jesus Christ.

IN one we may observe great pretensions to the
 christian name, deceiving himself and almost all
 around him with a species of pharisaical hypocrisy.
 To the externals of religion he is rigidly attentive;

puts

puts on his looks of sanctity with his Sunday's cloathing, enters the church with a puritanical solemnity, and is louder in his responses and mechanical prayers than any other person in the congregation; thus from the repetition of what an imitative bird or a lifeless piece of mechanism may be brought to perform, does he imagine himself more holy than his neighbours; --- but strip this man of his Sunday's garb, examine his transactions during the remainder of the week which will enable you to analyze the sentiments of his heart, and then judge if they bear any resemblance to his outward deportment. --- He *thanks his God that he is not as other men are*, worshipers of the deity in silence or *the still small voice* of humble penitence; his opinions are *right*, and to doubt them is to fly in the face of infallibility, and whoever for conscience sake should chance to do it, he will fly from his presence like the *Jews of old who had no dealings with the Samaritans*. Ask this man if he ever parted with a single farthing from a motive of being kindly affectioned to any one with brotherly love, and you confound him. --- Ask him again how it came to pass that avarice took up its lodg-

ing in the breast of a saint, and it is probable he will answer, that, your language is too harsh, for what you call avarice, he calls a prudent œconomy and thinks the world very severe as well as unjust in thus censuring his conduct; in short, he will palliate all his vices in turn, and convince himself, tho' he may not you, that he is as upright as holy Job. --- Can the poets satyr or the moralists animadversions be too severe in exposing such a character? --- Grasping at unbounded wealth and regardless how he becomes possessed of it, increasing the widow's tears and orphan's cries to accumulate his useless mass. --- But perhaps he may not deserve the last accusation; self gratification may prompt him to dissipate his hoards in the luxuries of life, and he may build himself palaces *lined with cedar and painted with vermilion*, without bestowing a single mite towards the relief of those miserable wretches *who have not where to lay their heads*; furnishing his table with all the luxurious elegancies which can be procured from the most distant climes, sitting down to them, perhaps, with a sated appetite, or else gorging more than nature requires, and in the midst of his revels, forgets those poor objects who are
starv-

starving at his door and would be thankful to feed of the crumbs which fall from his crowded table.

CAN this man with all his pompous shew of religion be stiled a true Christian? Can he with justice claim a reward in heaven who never practises the evangelical precept of *being kindly affectioned to his poor inferiors with brotherly love*? Surely not; a sober pagan would be ashamed of such a character. Perhaps it would be useless to inform him that this is the anniversary of an institution intended for the instruction of the ignorant poor, to cultivate the neglected minds of the rising generation by impressing upon them a proper sense of God, the knowledge of a Redeemer, and an expectation of future rewards and punishments; --- to lead them gently into the paths of religion, equally guarding them against enthusiasm on the one hand and infidellity on the other; in short, to lay a foundation for their present and future happiness, and to make them exemplary in the discharge of their duty to God, in a loyal obedience to the King, and in a display of brotherly love and christian charity towards all their fellow creatures.

But

But in vain do you relate such things to him; his purse will not open to support your institution, unless you can convince him, that *he*, as an individual, will be partaker of the benefit and receive upon his loan (for gift it cannot be called) tenfold interest.

IN this case conduct him to the habitation of vice and indigence, there he will meet with more forcible arguments to make him do good in his generation than it is in the power of words to express; there he will be presented with a view of the combined characters of ignorance, indolence, and blasphemy, at all ages and in both sexes; --- the one conspicuous for theft and plunder, the other for sloth and shameless prostitution, and instead of being useful members of society they are a burthen and a curse to it; from the cradle they are brought up in profligacy, which increases as they advance to maturity and manhood, in both stages they are ignorant of the principles of religion and scarcely know that there is a God, tho' they are frequently invoking his "damnation upon others, "when it is to be feared their own is too certain." *

The

* Bishop Sherlock's pastoral letter

The awful prospect of the day of judgment was never properly represented to them, consequently there is no check upon their licentious inclinations, except the laws of our country; but it has long since been observed, "that laws without manners are "useless," and daily experience evinces the truth of this observation: What wonder then that robberies increase, that the blood of innocence is wantonly shed, and outrageous tumults frequent in our streets? But the catastrophe ends not here; --- the miscreant seldom escapes more than once; vindictive authority ceases not it's pursuit but discovers him in the secret dens of pilferers and robbers, where mutual guilt encourages mutual audacity; hence he is dragged with trembling limbs, to the bar of justice, to receive the due sentence of the law, when an ignominious death and a disgraceful funeral conclude the life of the miserable convict.

If this is not sufficient for the purpose of conviction, let him attend our frequent, and with sorrow we may add, numerous executions at the gallows; there let him ask the unhappy criminals one by one, what was the occasion of the error that brought on their untimely end, and the majority will

will answer, --- neglect of the Lord's day in infancy and youth; --- accustomed to hear the conversation of their careless and impious parents, who on that day particularly are wont to ridicule the church and speak disdainfully of their Minister; authorising at the same time, their families to herd with the profligate and abandoned, at an age when their "active" minds must be employed either in good or evil, "and on a day when they are set at liberty from "their weekly labours;" if one wicked companion only, be admitted to their society, universal corruption is the consequence, *the fear of God* is no longer before them, and the transition from small to great crimes, is scarcely perceptible.

If this is the case, (and daily experience testifies that it is,) surely it is time that we *should be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*, and endeavour to prevent an evil rather than suffer it to be punished; and what more effectual check can be given to the licentious inclinations of the rising generation, than to impress upon the mind an awful sense of the Deity, a proper respect for his laws, and to warn them of the fatal consequences attending

ing their violation. And here I must beg leave to exhort those who are predetermined not to grant us their aid, that they will at least be silent upon the subject, and not endeavour to influence others to oppose an institution which cannot possibly do any harm, but may be productive of the greatest service to us, and to our posterity; if you are, yourselves, determined not to do good, suffer I beseech you, others to do it: If the welfare of society consists in the good behaviour of it's members, every man who wishes well to his country will not hesitate a moment to encourage and support a scheme which bids so fair for the accomplishment of this important end, and even the miser himself may contribute his mite, as it may probably be a mean of securing his thousands; -- if honesty becomes more universal, his coffers of course will be secure, his wakeful nights will terminate here, and his loan be repaid with tenfold interest.

Thus, viewed in a political light, this institution deserves the attention of every member in civil society, nor can it be said that these opinions are altogether speculative: The annual reports of commit-

tees, erected for the purpose of regulating these schools, confirm it's great utility in every part of the kingdom; one circumstance in particular speaks forcibly in favour of this *labour of love*, which, however extraordinary it may seem, is nevertheless reported from the most respectable authority, namely, "that a sense of virtue and religion has manifestly communicated itself from the children to the parents." * But there is no necessity to go from home in search of arguments for the continuation of these schools: Complaint was made, and with great reason, of the dissolute behaviour of youth in our streets on the Lord's day; this is now in a great measure (would to God it was altogether) suppressed. You must be convinced that the children who are sent to the Sunday-schools, spend their time in a more profitable manner, than if they were suffered to wander at large and indiscriminately practise their wanton depredations; you have heard them undergo a public examination, and pleasing no doubt it must be to observe, infants, enabled to give a rational account of their faith, and by answering the questions which are put to them, afford instruction to numbers who

* See the Bishop of Chester's letter upon the subject of Sunday-schools.

who have arrived at the age of sixty or seventy years, and are just tottering upon the brink of the grave. Pleasing however as this prospect is, a cloud hangs over to obscure it's brightness; and I cannot help lamenting, that in this populous and extensive district, great numbers of servants and apprentices are suffered by their negligent masters to absent themselves, not only from the school, but also from the church. --- Here perhaps you may reply (for such has been the case) that you have not a sufficient authority over them; if this is true, I am sure you are not fit to be the head of a family, and careless must that parent be, who commits his child to your charge; if he regards not your moral admonitions, what attention can you expect from him, when as a mechanic you instruct him in your trade or occupation? Yet for your own benefit you chearfully give the latter and take care, no doubt, to see them observed, and were you as zealous in enforcing the former, your authority would not be so slightly regarded as you imagine: Do you but set the example of virtue and religion yourself, and your domestics will find it necessary to tread in your steps: Ill do you consult your own interest when you con-

nive at this flagrant neglect in your servants, for if you wish that they should fear you as a man, the best way of accomplishing this, is to bring them up in the fear of God.

FROM motives of a political nature it might be expected that your influence would be exerted to accomplish this end; but I trust you will be actuated by more noble and disinterested views when you consider the subject in a religious light.

If you believe there is a God, you will wish to make that belief more universal; if you believe that he sent his only son to redeem the world, you will strive to make all mankind partakers of his redemption, and if you believe that there will be a future state of rewards and punishments, you will be anxious for the happiness of your fellow creatures in another world; this is *to be kindly affectioned with brotherly love*, this is the true evangelical charity which wisheth well to it's neighbour; this also is the foundation of your own future happiness, for scripture assures us, *that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

FOR

For the benefit of the poor these schools were established; but many being averse to send their children for instruction, a resolution was made, "that every kind of parochial relief would be withdrawn from those parents who neglected to send their children to school, and that nothing but ill health would be deemed a sufficient excuse for this omission." And here I cannot avoid taking notice of the inefficacy of this resolution in many families; --- the blame must be imputed either to the parochial officers, or the parents themselves.

If the officers still continue to relieve such families, they certainly act a most dishonourable part; they may tell you that it is not enacted in the statutes at large, therefore they are not obliged to enforce it; which is indeed very true, yet notwithstanding this, every well wisher to his country will allow that it is a prudent precaution, and a resolution *which should not be broken*. But, if it has not been violated by those who are in office, (as I am willing to hope it has not) the fault must be in the parents. To such then, I beg leave to address myself,

self, beseeching them to *suffer the word of exhortation* with candid minds.

FOR the benefit of your children, as it was before observed, these schools were established, which was not the work of a day, a month, or a year; many prejudices were to be removed before a subscription could be opened, and even then had it not been for the liberal contributions of a gentleman* whose mind is ever fixed upon *doing good*, but whose residence is no longer amongst us, this scheme had proved abortive. Destitute however as we are of an opulent patron, yet I trust that providence will protect our well meant endeavours, and influence the minds of numbers *to be kindly affectioned* to their poor fellow creatures *with brotherly love*. Should we be so fortunate as to raise a sufficient sum for the continuation of these schools, I hope you will be more diligent than heretofore in causing your children to attend them; had they but persevered a little longer, it is more than probable, that some of the prizes which this day have been distributed, might have fallen to their share; trifling indeed is the

* H. C. Wise Esquire, of the Priory, Warwick.

the intrinsic value of them, yet they contain a public testimonial of the childrens' good behaviour to whom they are given, and will hereafter no doubt, be a strong recommendation to their respective employers when they go out into the world. If parental affection is not totally extinct in your breasts, you will *yet* I am confident consider the good of your offspring, and exert that authority which God and nature have given you over them, that they may be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. --- You know that both you and your children must die, and that *after death comes judgment*, you may perhaps have comfortable hopes of your own salvation, but can you rest satisfied in the prospect of your childrens' eternal ruin? --- If so, *you have denied the faith, and are become worse than infidels*; --- but I hope better things, and am willing to impute your neglect to inattention; if this be the case, suffer me to represent to you a scene which may frequently be realized not only in the great metropolis of this kingdom, but in every town set apart for the periodical administration of justice.

JUVENIS

JUVENIS, the son of a careless parent, sets out in life uninstructed in the principles of religion; --- the being of a God he disbelieves, the merits of a Saviour he is unacquainted with, and the practice of morality he despises: Without check or restraint upon his conscience, he commences rake and libertine, neglects the trade or occupation in which he was brought up, and squanders his poor earnings in riot and prodigality: Averse to labour for his maintenance, he betakes himself to evil courses, and if possessed of a sufficient share of artifice, has recourse to forgery, or else with threats and armed violence robs the peaceable traveller upon the highway of that money which he had earned by his laborious toil: --- The hand of justice pursues him; --- he is apprehended, committed, tried, and condemned. Now let the careless parent visit his son as a convict in his noxious cell. He is struck with horror at the grating of the hinge which supports the iron door, and upon it's opening, involuntarily starts back; --- at length he slowly proceeds till he sees by a glimmering light issuing through the gate, the object of his affection chained down to a bed of straw; --- speak he cannot till tears give vent

vent to his grief, and then with broken accents they mutually salute each other. --- " O darling of my
 " younger days, little did I think that my aged
 " eyes would ever behold thee in this ignominious
 " posture; I see when it is too late, the impropriety of my conduct and am ashamed to think
 " that overtures were made to teach thee the duty
 " of a Christian; --- these I rejected with scorn,
 " because instruction was irksome to thy tender
 " mind; thee did I indulge in whatever contributed
 " to thy wanton sports, and lest they should be abridged, I neglected the important concern of
 " education. --- Discipline I never exercised, restraint I never imposed, the fatal consequence of
 " which thou must shortly experience in an untimely death, and I the shame and reproach of,
 " in a worn out life; --- farewell --- a long farewell my dearest son, *would God I had died for thee; my son, my son!* "

F I N I S.

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 "straint I never imposed, the fatal consequence of
 "which thou must shortly experience in an un-
 "timely death, and I the same and remission of
 "in a worn out life; --- a long time
 "well my dear self, for I had died for
 "thee; my son, my son!

